

recover from recent surgery, I was unable to attend rollcall votes Nos. 59 through 63.

Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted in favor of the cloture motion on H.R. 240; against the motion to table S. Amendment No. 258; in favor of S. Amendment No. 255; and in favor of H.R. 240, the clean Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

I would have also opposed the cloture motion to proceed to S. 534 because this legislation would be destructive to families and our economy.●

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks at the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

This is the first hearing of not only our subcommittee but the entire Senate Appropriations Committee.

How's that Senator Feinstein? We're the early bird, and I want to say at the outset what a privilege it's been to work with the Senator from California over the last few years. She's been chairman, and I've been ranking member. Our seats have switched, but the relationship hasn't changed. I look forward to treating her with at least as much courtesy as she's always treated me. Let's see if I can outdo her because it's a treat to work with somebody who's capable of making a decision, expressing herself well and easy to work with. So, Senator Feinstein I look forward to our continued relationship.

This morning we're having a hearing to review the president's fiscal year 2016 budget request for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, which is part of the Department of Interior.

Senator Feinstein and I will each have an opening statement and then each senator may have up to five minutes for an opening statement in the order in which they arrived. Senator Graham has let me know that he has a 3 o'clock hearing, so if the senators don't mind I'll try to work him in before 3 o'clock as a courtesy to him. We'll then turn to the witnesses for their testimony. Each witness will have five minutes. We'd appreciate your summarizing your testimony in that time. We'll include their full statements in the record. And then, senators will be recognized for five minutes of questions in the order in which they arrived.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here today and thank Senator Feinstein for working with me on this. Our witnesses include Jo-Ellen Darcy, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Welcome Assistant Secretary Darcy. Estevan Lopez, Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation. Mr. Lopez, welcome. Jennifer Gimbel, the Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science. That's a long title, nice to see you. And Lieutenant General Thomas P. Bostick, Chief of Engineers for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Governing is about setting priorities, and unfortunately, the president's budget request for these agencies shows a failure to do so.

The president's overall budget proposes spending that exceeds the budget caps estab-

lished by the Budget Control Act of 2011 by about \$74 billion. And one of the priorities the president often speaks about often is our nation's infrastructure.

Yet despite all that proposed new spending and all that talk, this proposal cuts the Corps' budget by \$751 million, or about 14 percent below last year's actual spending level. This budget proposes cutting the Corps' funding to the actual level of spending in 2007—we are literally moving backward, on an agency that is crucial to maintaining our country's infrastructure.

The reason this is such a problem is that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers touches the lives of almost every American. The Corps maintains our inland waterways, it deepens and keeps our ports open, looks after many of our recreational waters and land, manages the river levels to prevent flooding, and its dams provide emission-free, renewable hydroelectric energy.

All of these activities attract the intense interest of the American people, and of their United States senators. I can recall when, I was a member of the Environmental and Public Works Committee, after the Missouri and Mississippi rivers flooded four years ago, a whole room full of senators showed up to ask for more money to deal with what went wrong and what went right with disaster relief efforts. So, there's a real interest in these proposals.

The reality is that for all the Corps does there are many things it could do better, and setting priorities in our spending is one way to better invest taxpayer dollars.

An important example of the administration's failure to set priorities in my home state of Tennessee is the lack of any funds in the president's budget request to restart replacement of Chickamauga Lock. Congress has done its job the last three years to move ahead promptly on replacing Chickamauga Lock, and it's disappointing the Obama administration has failed to do its job.

Here's what we've done. Congress, first, passed a law that reduced the amount of money that comes from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund to replace Olmsted Lock, a project in Illinois and Kentucky that was soaking up almost all of the money that is available for inland waterway projects. Second, Congress worked with the commercial waterways industry to establish a priority list for projects that needed to be funded, on which Chickamauga ranks near the top, in fourth place. And third, just this past year, working together, we enacted a user fee increase that commercial barge owners asked to pay in order to provide more money to replace locks and dams across the country, including Chickamauga Lock.

These are three extremely important steps to give our country the inland waterways that we need. These three things taken together should make it possible for the Corps of Engineers to move rapidly to begin to replace Chickamauga Lock. The problem with Chickamauga Lock is it's made of aging concrete and could fail if we don't replace it. In fact, in October of last year, the lock was closed for several days to all navigation traffic for emergency repairs after an inspection revealed cracks in the concrete.

This project's not just important to Chattanooga, but to all of Eastern Tennessee because of the number of jobs affected. We're almost out of time for a solution—the lock could close in a few years unless progress is made. If this happens it would throw 150,000 trucks on Interstate 75, it would increase the cost of shipping to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the weapons complex and to manufacturers across the state.

So you can see how Chickamauga Lock—and other projects like it across the country—ought to be a priority, and why the Corps' budget should make it a priority.

In addition to the Corps, we fund the Bureau of Reclamation.

The Bureau of Reclamation delivers water to one in five Western farmers, irrigating 10-million acres of some of the most productive agricultural land in the world.

I would note that this is the first time that Commissioner Lopez and Assistant Secretary Gimbel have appeared before this subcommittee, and we welcome them both.

Without the infrastructure that these two agencies provide, our nation would be vastly different. With that in mind, we are here today to discuss the administration's fiscal year 2016 budget request for these both agencies. I look forward to the testimony.

Before I turn to Senator Feinstein for her statement, I would like to note that this is Roger Cockrell's last hearing, at least the last one he'll attend in his capacity with us as a staff member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He's retiring at the end of the month, and we're going to miss him. For the past 14 budget cycles, senators on the subcommittee, whether republicans or democrats, have been well-served by Roger's expertise on both the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. It's hard to think of anyone inside or outside of Washington who matches Roger in knowledge or experience—and it is hard to think of a water resources bill that hasn't benefited from his guidance. So, Roger on behalf of the subcommittee, I wish to thank you for your service over these many years and wish your family best in your retirement.

RECOGNIZING THE VICTIMS OF THE SUMGAIT POGROMS

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I wish to recognize the victims of the mass murder of Armenians 27 years ago during the state-sponsored pogroms in Sumgait, Azerbaijan.

The citizens of Nagorno Karabakh peacefully petitioned to be reunited with Soviet Armenia and spoke out against the arbitrary borders established by Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union. This democratic exercise of free speech expressing a natural desire for self-determination was met with 3 days of violence and brutality against Armenian civilians, who were hunted down in their homes. Security forces in Soviet Azerbaijan turned a blind eye, allowing the mass murder of Armenians in a futile attempt to defeat this movement. The massacres of Armenians did not stop in Sumgait but were followed in other Azerbaijani towns such as Kirovabad in November 1988 and the capital Baku in January 1990. The U.S. Congress strongly condemned these massacres at that time. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians fled Azerbaijan, many finding their home in my State of Michigan, where there is a monument to the victims of the Sumgait massacres.

True democracies must respect the rights of the minority, allow citizens to peacefully speak freely, and protect the human rights of all residents. The people of Nagorno Karabakh and the victims of this senseless massacre played a critical role in promoting a democracy movement which helped to end the Soviet Union.

Today, I remember the victims and ask my colleagues and the American